

Appendix G – Trail Standards

Forest Service Direction

Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2353.15 - National Quality Standards for Trails

Apply the National Quality Standards for Trails in the planning, construction, maintenance, condition assessment, and management of NFTS trails, in accordance with FSH 2309.18, section 15.

Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2309.18, 14.2 - Trail Class

Use Trail Classes to inventory NFTS trails and to identify the applicable Design Parameters and costs for meeting the National Quality Standards for Trails.

1. Identify only one Trail Class per trail or trail segment.
2. Class descriptors reflect typical attributes of trails in each class. Local deviations from any Trail Class descriptor may be established based on trail-specific conditions, topography, or other factors, provided that the deviations are consistent with the general intent of the applicable Trail Class.
3. There is a direct relationship between Trail Class and Managed Uses (sec. 14.3): generally, one cannot be determined without consideration of the other.
4. Identify the appropriate Trail Class for each NFTS trail or trail segment based on the management intent in the applicable land management plan, travel management decisions, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction. Apply the Trail Class that most closely reflects the management intent for the trail or trail segment, which may or may not reflect the current condition of the trail.

FSH 2309.18, 15 - National Quality Standards for Trails

In accordance with FSM 2353.15, apply the National Quality Standards for Trails in planning, constructing, and managing NFTS trails and related trail projects.

1. The National Quality Standards for Trails establish desired outcomes for NFTS trails managed at a full-service level. These standards also form the baseline for estimating the cost of managing NFTS trails. The National Quality Standards for Trails consist of five key measures: health and cleanliness, safety and security, condition of facilities, responsiveness, and resource setting.
2. The complete set of National Quality Standards for Trails is contained in FSH 2309.18, exhibit 01.
3. Critical National Quality Standards for Trails are identified with an asterisk. If any of these standards is not met, the resulting conditions pose a high probability of immediate and permanent injury to persons or property. If any of the critical standards cannot be met due to budget or other constraints, take action as soon as practicable to correct or mitigate the problem. Corrective or mitigating measures may include closing the trail, portions of the trail, or associated trail structures to public use.
4. Take mitigating steps if conditions, facilities, or services addressed by noncritical standards decline to the point where visitor's health or safety is threatened. Examples

include repairing the trail, portions of the trail, or associated trail structure or removing trail structures that are in disrepair and no longer needed.

5. The National Quality Standards for Trails apply to NFTS trails and associated trail structures. The National Quality Standards for Trails do not apply to trailheads. Trailheads, which are constructed with the primary purpose of providing visitor amenities, are typically considered developed sites. Trailheads constructed with the primary purpose of resource protection are typically considered concentrated use areas within General Forest Areas.

National Quality Standards

National quality standards define the corporate level of quality the Forest Service plans to provide the public at full service (Forest Plan) levels. These standards form the baseline for estimating the total cost of providing the quality opportunities visitors and customer's expectations.

Recreation program components with National Quality Standards include: Developed Sites, Trails, General Forest Areas, Interpretive Services and Recreation Special Use Permit Administration. National Quality Standards for these components have been established for the Key Measures: Health and Cleanliness, Safety and Security, Condition of Facilities, Responsiveness, Resource Setting, and Permit Administration & Monitoring.

Critical National Standards are identified with an asterisk (*). If not met, the resulting conditions pose a high probability of immediate or permanent loss to people or property. If they cannot be met, due to budget or other constraints, immediate action must be taken to correct or mitigate the problem. Immediate action may include closing to public use the site, trail, area, permit, or portions of the affected site, trail, or area. If conditions, facilities, or services addressed by "non-critical" standards decline to the point where the health or safety of the visitor is threatened, then mitigating actions must be taken.

The TRAILS Component is made up of National Forest System Trails.

National Quality Trail Standards apply to system trails and associated trail structures. The standards for Trails do not typically include trailhead facilities. Trailheads, constructed with the primary purpose of providing visitor amenities, are typically considered developed sites and are included in the Developed Sites Component. Trailheads constructed with the primary purpose of resource protection, are typically considered Concentrated Use Areas within the General Forest Area Component.

National Quality Trail Standards describe outputs customers can expect to encounter when visiting any System Trail.

The task frequencies described in the clarifiers suggest a typical range and do not preclude the possibility of exceptions.

- Trail development is consistent with ROS objectives and FLMP prescription.
- Adjacent resources are maintained or enhanced
- Scenery management is consistent with trail objectives.
- Density of users is appropriate.

STANDARD	CLARIFIERS	"CREW" TYPE	TASKS
1. *Effects from trail use do not conflict with environmental laws (such as ESA, NHPA, Clean Water, TES, etc.)	<p><u>Initiate Analysis</u> As often as necessary, based on local situations and the potential for conflict, the trail manager visits the trail and assesses trail use impacts. If recreational use of a trail conflicts with specific environmental law, the trail manager identifies the need for appropriate specialist analysis and then participates as needed in the determination of mitigation.</p> <p>An example of appropriate specialist analysis is a wildlife biologist visiting the trail to determine if bald eagles are nesting and being unacceptably disturbed by the presence of trail users.</p> <p><u>Mitigate.</u> Mitigation that includes operations tasks, e.g. trail closure, warning signs, patrols, etc is costed under this standard.</p> <p>Mitigation that includes maintenance, repair, replacement, decommissioning, alteration, expansion or construction of any constructed feature is costed in the appropriate COF standard.</p> <p>Res. Setting #1 = Identify AM, DM or CI work Annual Maintenance = CofF #1 Deferred Maintenance = CofF#2 Capital Improvement = CofF#3</p>	<p>Trail Manager</p> <p>Trail Maintenance</p> <p>Trail Operations</p> <p>Trail Operations</p>	<p><u>Initiate Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify need for appropriate specialist

conditions of the adjacent management area(s).	recommendations for proposal modification and/or mitigation.		
3. Trail opportunities, trail development, and trail management are consistent with Recreation Management System (ROS, SMS, BBM) objectives and the Forest Land Management Plan.	<p>To meet this standard, the trail manager ensures the trail is managed per the Forest Plan prescription. This includes ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail location, design and management are consistent with ROS and SMS objectives for the area; • The trail is managed per assigned Trail Class; and that • Designed Use and Managed Uses are implemented and managed per prescription; 	Trail Manager	<p>Ensure that the Forest Plan trail prescription is met, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the trail is located, designed and managed consistently with ROS and SMS objectives for the area; • Ensure the trail is constructed, maintained and managed per the assigned Trails Class; • Ensure that the Trail's Designed Use and Managed Uses prescriptions are met. • Establish trail capacities, if needed
4. The trail, use of the trail, and trail maintenance methods do not cause unacceptable damage to other resources.	<p><u>Initiate Analysis.</u> As often as necessary, based on local situations and the potential for negative impacts, the trail manager assesses trailside resources for damage as a result of poorly maintained, poorly located or poorly designed trails and trail structures. The trail manager identifies the need for appropriate specialist analysis, if any, and then participates as needed in the determination of mitigation.</p> <p><u>Mitigate</u> Mitigation includes correcting or preventing loss of vegetation and erosion caused by the trail, use of the trail, and maintenance methods on the trail.</p> <p>To meet this standard, mitigation is limited to operations activities, e.g. stream-bank stabilization, tree/shrub/grass planting, temporary/disposable fencing, warning signs, enforcement patrols, etc.</p> <p>Mitigation that includes maintenance, repair, replacement, decommissioning, alteration, expansion or construction of any constructed feature is costed in the appropriate COF standard.</p>	Trail Manager	<p><u>Initiate Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess trailside resources for damage as a result of poorly maintained, poorly located or poorly designed trails and trail structures. • Identify the need for any appropriate specialist analysis. • Participate as needed in the determination of mitigation. <p><u>Mitigate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilize stream banks. • Plant Trees/grass/shrubs. • Install fencing. • Post warning, closure, or detour signs. • Install traffic control

			devices (Non-constructed features)
5. Trail use does not exceed established trail capacity.	<p>This standard only applies to trails with established capacities per unit management decisions.</p> <p><u>Monitor.</u> Monitor use levels.</p> <p><u>Mitigate.</u> Mitigate use impacts when use levels exceed capacities.</p> <p>To meet this standard, mitigation is limited to operations activities such as patrolling the trail as needed to protect the trail features, adjacent resources, and visitor experience, and monitoring the effectiveness of physical barriers, signs, and traffic control devices.</p> <p>Mitigation that includes maintenance, repair, replacement, decommissioning, and reservation systems.</p>		
STANDARD	CLARIFIERS	TYPE	
1. *Hazards do not exist on or along the trail.	<p>Hazards are conditions not meeting the trail prescription that adversely affect user safety.</p> <p>Hazardous conditions are corrected per the trail prescription. "Hazardous" varies based on the trail ROS classification and the trail prescription).</p> <p>Hazardous trail conditions caused either by</p>	<p>Trail Manager</p> <p>Trail Maintenance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct prescribed safety inspections. • Identify mitigation tasks • Fence off sloughs. • Close/fence off hazardous

	<p>humans or natural occurrences) that develop during the managed use season are mitigated or the affected section of trail is closed.</p> <p><u>Mitigate</u> Mitigation includes operations activities such as posing warning signs, increasing patrols or closing the trail is included under this standard.</p> <p>Mitigation that includes maintenance, repair, replacement, decommissioning, alteration, expansion or construction of any constructed feature is costed in the appropriate COF standard.</p>	Trail Operations	<p>structures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign/post trail closures.
2. Enforce laws, regulations and special orders.	<p>Enforce 36 CFR 261 regulations enforceable by Forest Protection Officers (LE Level II) as needed to protect government facilities from damage and to ensure visitors are not exposed to prohibited activities.</p> <p>Mitigate, as appropriate, activities prohibited under the 36 CFR261 sections pertinent to use of Forest Development Trails. As discretion warrants, counsel or advise users engaged in prohibited activities on the effects and impacts of their actions.</p> <p>Respond to complaints of non-conforming trail use. Typically this includes follow-up or response by the FPO or trail manager, depending on the scope and urgency of the situation.</p> <p>Patrol frequency can be as seldom as once a year and typically not more than once daily.</p>	Trail Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce regulations upon contact with users engaged in prohibited activities. • Respond to complaints from third parties. • As discretion warrants, counsel or advise users engaged in prohibited activities on the effects and impacts of their actions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience meets visitor expectations, needs and preferences. • Information and interpretive services are available. • Appropriate amenities are available • “Good Host “ approach is implemented and apparent 			
STANDARD	CLARIFIERS	“CREW” TYPE	TASKS
1. *When signed as accessible, trails meet current accessibility guidelines.	<p>If trails signed as accessible do not, in fact, meet accessibility direction or if accessibility conditions are altered, remove or correct accessibility signs or schedule accessibility signs for removal.</p> <p>[Meeting this standard does not include the repair and/or replacement of improper or inadequate accessibility signs (See Condition of Facilities).]</p>	Trail Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check accessible trail features and accessibility signing at appropriate frequencies to ensure accessibility signing is accurate and meets current agency guidelines. • If features signed as accessible do not meet

		accessibility guidelines, remove or correct inaccurate signs, or schedule signs for removal, upon discovery.
restrictions and other such as access, are posted at the trailhead.	Trail Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post applicable trail use and trail management information in appropriate locations at the termini or along the trail.
cost-effective systems to communicate needs at appropriate levels and throughout the trail network. Provide customer comments as part of regular patrol. Receptacles are provided at trailheads and other contact points as appropriate by the trail manager.	Trail Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribute visitor comment cards as the opportunity arises.• Provide distribution and collection information to users.• Provide comment card receptacles at trailheads and other contact points.
facilities look good. facilities are in good repair facilities are appropriate facilities function		
VERIFIERS	"CREW" TYPE	TASKS

Work performed to
or repair failures during
occur. Includes
performed in the year
to occur. Includes periodic
surveys by qualified

_____. Work to restore a damaged, broken, or worn-out fixed asset, component, or item of equipment to normal operating condition. Repairs may be done as annual maintenance or deferred maintenance activities.

_____. Scheduled servicing, repairs, inspections, adjustments, and replacement of parts that result in fewer breakdowns and fewer premature replacements, and help achieve the expected life of the fixed asset. Inspections are a critical part of preventive maintenance as they provide the information for scheduling maintenance and evaluating its effectiveness.

	<p>replacement, rather than repair or rehabilitation, is more cost effective, more environmentally sound, or in the best interest of the government. Replacement of an asset or component usually occurs when it nears has or exceeded its useful life.</p> <p>_____ Demolition, dismantling, removal, obliteration and/or disposal of a deteriorated or otherwise unneeded asset or component, including necessary cleanup work. This action eliminates the deferred maintenance needs for the fixed asset.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey features to obtain detailed information required for subsequent design. • Design features requiring repair, rehab or replacement. • Prepare, administer and inspect deferred maintenance contracts
<p>3. <u>New</u>, <u>altered</u>, or <u>expanded</u> trails meet Forest Service design standards and are consistent with Forest Plan prescriptions.</p>	<p>_____. The construction, installation, or assembly of a new fixed asset, or the significant alteration, expansion, or extension of an existing fixed asset to accommodate a change of purpose.</p> <p>_____. The erection, construction, installation, or assembly of a new fixed asset.</p> <p>_____ Work to change the function of an existing fixed asset. The capacity or size of the fixed asset is not significantly changed. Deferred maintenance of the original fixed asset may be reduced or eliminated by an alteration.</p> <p>_____. Increasing the capacity or size of an existing fixed asset to serve needs different from, or significantly greater than, those originally intended.</p>	Trail Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erect, construct, install, or assemble a new fixed asset. • Perform work to change the function of an existing fixed asset. The capacity or size of the fixed asset is not significantly changed. • Increase the capacity or size of an existing fixed asset to serve needs different from, or significantly greater than, those originally intended. • As appropriate, analyze environmental impacts of ground-disturbing activities in existing developed sites or on existing system trails • Survey features to obtain detailed information required for subsequent design. • Design features to be altered, expanded or constructed in existing developed sites or on existing system trails. • Prepare, administer and inspect contracts for feature alteration, expansion, or new construction in existing developed sites or on existing system trails.